

REMARKS

Consideration of this application in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

A. Status of the Claims and Explanation of Amendments

Claims 1-32 are pending, and were rejected pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,494,776 to Molbak (“Molbak”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,730,272 to Dobbins et al. (“Dobbins”). [11/14/06 Final Office Action at pp. 2-3].

By this paper, claims 1-27 are amended. Previously pending claims 1-13 were directed to “[a]n acceptor,” previously pending claims 14-26 were directed to “[a] coin- or banknote-operated machine,” and previously pending claim 27 was directed to “[a] system comprising a plurality of coin- or banknote- operated machines.” By this paper, each of these claims is amended to be directed to “[a] system” comprising “a network; and a plurality of acceptors in communication with one another via the network.” Support for these amendments is found throughout the application as originally filed, including for example at pages 2, and 6-7. No new matter will be added to this application by entry of these amendments.

B. Claims 1-32 are Patentably Distinct from Molbak in view of Dobbins

The rejection of claims 1-32 is respectfully traversed. As explained more fully below, the requirements for such rejections are not met because neither Molbak nor Dobbins teaches, discloses or suggests “a plurality of acceptors in communication with

one another via the network, each acceptor comprising ... communication means ... for sending alarm signals from the acceptor and receiving alarm signals from other acceptors, via the network ...”as recited in Applicants’ claim 1.

Specifically, Applicants’ claim 1 recites:

“1. A system for accepting money items or the like, the system comprising:

a network; and

a plurality of acceptors in communication with one another via the network,

each acceptor comprising

sensing means for sensing parameters of an item submitted to the acceptor,

processing means for determining acceptability of the item submitted to the acceptor in the basis of an acceptance criteria using the parameters thereof sensed by the sensing means, and

communication means, associated with the processing means, for sending alarm signals from the acceptor and receiving alarm signals from other acceptors, via the network,

wherein the processing means is configured to respond to a condition indicative of a fraud attempt by sending an alarm signal using said communication means and

wherein the processing means is configured to respond to an alarm signal, received by said communication means via the network, to modify the acceptance criteria.”

Molbak is directed to a coin acceptance method of receiving the contents of a coin hopper in a relatively short time period. Molbak’s Figures 12-18 depict a coin counter/sorter and coupon/voucher dispensing device. [6/12-16]. These devices have, *inter alia*, a coin counting/sorting portion (1202) and a coupon dispensing portion (1204).

[See Figure 12]. These devices may also include an I/O system 1308, which coordinates operation of the various systems (e.g., waste control, coin holding/transfer, counting/sorting, and voucher/coupon systems), receives and provides appropriate information and instructions to and from the user, and sends and receives information to and from remote sites. [6/34-38 and 52-59; see also Figure 13]. Molbak says the exchange of information with these remote sites is “for receiving operating information (such as discount information, coupon information, and updated software) and providing malfunction or diagnostic or statistical information.” [6/59-63]. From this text, Applicants understand that Molbak is suggesting that the acceptors exchange information with a remote site that is *not* an acceptor. Nothing in these passages suggests an exchange of information between the acceptors themselves.

Accordingly, Applicants argued in their September 5, 2006 Amendment that Molbak fails to teach, disclose or suggest “communication means” as recited in Applicants’ claim 1 because, *inter alia*, Molbak does not teach, disclose or suggest communication between acceptors themselves, but rather between a coin-counting machine and a remote “central location.” [See generally 9/5/06 Amdt., pp. 11-15.]

The November 14, 2006 office action responded by asserting that Molbak contemplates communication between the coin counters and a central computing facility:

“Molbak discloses a central computing facility, such as described at col. 18, lines 57-60, that communicates with many coin counters/sorters.... The computer facility is disclosed as sending information to or receiving information

from a particular remote coin acceptor. See col. 17, line 65-
col. 18, line 60.” [11/14/06 Office Action at pp. 4-5].

It is true that Molbak describes information from the coin counters being
provided to a central location:

“[T]he apparatus is also configured for providing information
from the field location of the machine (or ‘remote location’)
to, for example, a central location such as offices of the
owner/operator of the machine.... [T]he communication can
be performed using a communication device such as modem
board 1826. Communication can also be performed over a
local area network system, over a wireless communication
system (such as a wireless LAN or a cellular telephone
communication system, or by a cable communication such as
an interactive television or video communication system.”
[17/65 – 18/12].

This passage merely contemplates the transmission of information from
individual coin counters to a central facility. Nothing in this passage, or the balance of
Molbak’s disclosure, teaches, discloses or even suggests an exchange of information
between the coin counters themselves.

Figures 21 and 22 depict procedures for initiating such information
transmission from a central location (2102) or from a remote location (2202),
respectively, [18/13-14 and 39-40]. In Figure 21 (and its associated text), the central
location instructs the remote site to download various information, such as relating to
armored car transactions 2104, the various transactions that have occurred over a
predetermined period of time 2106, or to service or maintenance status or problems 2108.
[18/16-30]. In Figure 22 (and its associated text), the remote location initiates a call to

the central location when the coin bags are nearly full 2204, or to report a malfunction 2206. [18/40-46]. Again, these passages describe communication between a single coin counter and a central facility, but do not suggest an exchange of information between the coin counters themselves. Moreover, these passages certainly do not disclose the transmission of alarm signals between coin counters themselves in response to a condition indicative of a fraud attempt in one of the coin counters.

The office action appears to understand and agree with this understanding of Molbak's disclosure in later remarks that Molbak nonetheless "suggests" these claim features:

"At col. 18, lines 7-12, Molbak discloses that communication between the central computer and the various acceptors can be performed by network or LAN. This also *suggests* that acceptors have the ability to and are adapted to communicate with each other." [11/14/06 Office Action at p. 5 (emphasis added)].

Applicants respectfully disagree that Molbak has any such suggestion.¹ As discussed above, nothing in Molbak's disclosure contemplates an exchange of information between the coin counters themselves. The central location initiated communication (shown in Figure 21) seeks information from the coin counter relating to armored cars, transaction reports and maintenance issues. [18/12-38]. The coin counter initiated communication (shown in Figure 22) requests an armored car, provides

¹ The sentence at column 18, lines 7-12 merely states that the communication between the coin counter and the central facility can be achieved by various means, e.g., wireless LAN, cellular telephone, etc. This sentence does not teach, disclose or suggest communication between the coin counters themselves.

transaction reports, or reports maintenance issues. [18/39-19/4]. Nothing in Molbak's disclosure teaches, discloses or suggests that any of this information would be shared with other coin counters, or that there would be any need to do so. Moreover, nothing in Molbak's disclosure teaches or suggests that alarm signals are to be shared with other coin counters.

Accordingly, Molbak fails to teach, disclose or suggest "a plurality of acceptors in communication with one another via the network, each acceptor comprising ... communication means ... for sending alarm signals from the acceptor and receiving alarm signals from other acceptors, via the network ..." as recited in Applicants' claim 1.

Dobbins is directed to a method for improved coin, bill and other currency acceptance and slug or counterfeit rejection. The office action alleges that Dobbins teaches an individual, isolated electronic coin testing apparatus (10) having a coin examining and sensing circuit (20) including individual sensor circuits (21, 22 and 23), and a processing and control circuit 30 as shown in Dobbins' Figure 1. Without commenting on that assertion, Applicants note that the office action does not allege that Dobbins teaches, discloses or suggests "a plurality of acceptors in communication with one another via the network, each acceptor comprising ... communication means ... for sending alarm signals from the acceptor and receiving alarm signals from other acceptors, via the network ..." as recited in Applicants' claim 1. Applicants' own review of Dobbins finds no such disclosure.

Accordingly, Applicants' claim 1 is respectfully asserted to be patentably distinct from Molbak in view of Dobbins. Applicants' independent claims 8, 14, 21, and 27 and dependent claims 2-7, 9-13, 15-20, 22-26 and 28-32 also are believed to be in condition for allowance for at least similar reasons.

CONCLUSION

For the above-stated reasons, this application is respectfully asserted to be in condition for allowance. An early and favorable examination on the merits is requested. In the event that a telephone conference would facilitate the examination of this application in any way, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the number provided.

THE COMMISSIONER IS HEREBY AUTHORIZED TO CHARGE ANY ADDITIONAL FEES WHICH MAY BE REQUIRED FOR THE TIMELY CONSIDERATION OF THIS AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 AND 1.17, OR CREDIT ANY OVERPAYMENT TO DEPOSIT ACCOUNT NO. 13-4500, ORDER NO. 1193-4049.

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Respectfully submitted,
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